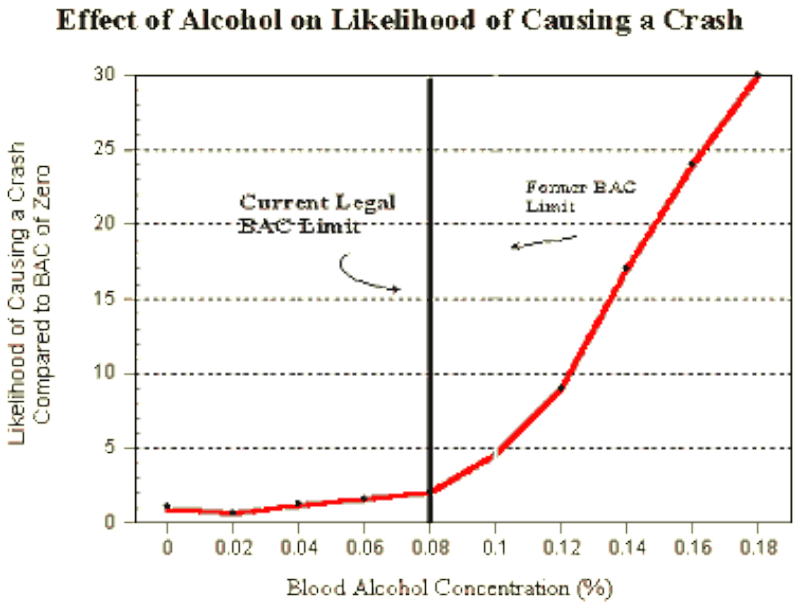
Alcohol and Automobiles…Don’t Mix

Alcohol and Automobiles

- Every year In the U.S. thousands of people are killed and critically injured in alcohol related automobile accidents. As soldiers, we are responsible for the safety and security of our country. This responsibility does not end at the end of the duty day, but extends to our personal lives as well.
- Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs is a clear and present danger to every citizen. Taking responsibility for your own actions and helping to keep others from drinking and driving is everyone’s responsibility.

Alcohol and Automobiles



- About 2.4% of nighttime drivers in Washington have a BAC of 0.08% or higher.
- About 3.7% have BACs above 0.05%.
- Impaired driving is more common after midnight. Between the hours of midnight and 3 A.M., about 4.6% of drivers have BACs above the legal limit, compared with 1.5% between 10 P.M. and midnight.

The Cold Hard Facts

- Last year, about 27% of all Washington traffic deaths -- 427 of 1,563 -- were related to drug or alcohol use.
- According to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA), in 1999, 38% of all fatal crashes and 7% of all nonfatal crashes nationwide had alcohol involvement.
- 15,786 fatalities in alcohol related crashes during 1999.
- An estimated 308,000 persons were injured in crashes where police reported that alcohol was present.
- About 3 in every 10 Americans will be involved in an alcohol related crash at some time in their lives.

Facts

- Male drivers (2.5%) were just over 4 times as likely to be legally intoxicated as females (0.6%).
- Most impaired drivers had been drinking beer (80% drivers whose BAC was 0.05% or higher had been drinking beer)
- Persons driving utility vehicles (Jeep, Blazer, Bronco, etc.) were most likely to me legally intoxicated (6%). Those driving minivans were least likely to be intoxicated (0.2%). Drivers of other types of vehicles were in between (2%).

Anatomy of a DWI Stop

- A DWI starts long before intervention of Law Enforcement
- Intervention can begin many ways (infraction, accident, report from drivers, or check points)
- The LEO (Law Enforcement Officer) may follow the vehicle and build more evidence of impairment.
- A traffic stop is initiated. During this time the vehicle's registration plate is run through checks with DMV and DCI.
- While the vehicle is being checked, the LEO watches the occupants for movement (hiding items

Anatomy of a DWI Stop

- After checks have been completed, the LEO makes his approach to the vehicle.
- While talking the the driver and occupants, the LEO evaluates the condition of the personnel in the vehicle (smell of alcohol open containers, fresh cigarettes, etc.).
- The LEO returns the his vehicle and runs the driver (and possibly other occupants information).
- LEO returns to the vehicle and asks the driver to step out.
- LEO administers a battery of Field Sobriety Tests.

Anatomy of a DWI Stop

Field Sobriety Tests

One-leg Stand

Walk and Turn

Anatomy of a DWI Stop

Field Sobriety Tests

Anatomy of a DWI Stop

- Portable Breath Test (PBT/ASTD) is administered.

Portable Breath Test (PBT)

Alcohol Screening Test Device (ASTD)

Anatomy of a DWI Stop

- Driver is apprehended, searched, and transported to the Police Station.
- Vehicle is Towed.
- At the Police Station, the driver is brought before a State Certified Chemical Analyst and advised of his rights.

Anatomy of a DWI Stop

- Subject is requested to submit to a chemical analysis to determine alcohol concentration on the Intoxilyzer 5000.

Intoxilyzer 5000 by CMI Inc.

Anatomy of a DWI Stop

- If the test reveals that the driver is legally intoxicated, the driver is further processed, cited for all charges (UCMJ) and placed in the holding cell (Drunk Tank).
- If the suspect is a military member, that soldier's chain of command is notified (CO or 1SG/SGM/CSM) and advised to come pick them up.
- The case is completed and filed.
- The charges can be pursued by the unit and/or U.S. Federal District Courts.

The Consequences (Military)

- Even harsher than civilian penalties.
- Article 111 Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) -- Drunken or reckless operation of a vehicle-- an arrest for DWI resulting in personal injury can result in a dishonorable discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances and imprisonment for 18 months. Where no personal injury is involved, service members still face a bad-conduct discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances and 6 months confinement. *Additionally, military members who are convicted by courts-martial have a felony record.*

Prevention and Enforcement

- Civilian Law Enforcement agencies have stepped up enforcement off post with numerous arrests and checkpoints.
- Military Police have an aggressive DWI enforcement program as well.
- Commanders should emphasize the legal and moral consequences of a DWI arrest and the negative impact on a military career.
- Designated drivers, Call-a-Cab, and “Battle Buddy” concepts should be established and continuously be encouraged at unit and team level.
- Soldiers should have numbers available on their persons at all times of who to contact if they become impaired.